From Boston to Los Angeles:

Women Marathoners's Changing Perspectives from Pleasure to Empowerment and the Establishment of the Women's Olympic Marathon

Erika Powers

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Abstract

April of 1966 was the first time a woman ran the Boston Athletic Association Marathon. That woman was Roberta “Bobbi” Gibb. Following Gibb came many other women, including Kathrine Switzer, the first “official” woman to run the BAA event, and Nina Kuscsik, the first winner of the women’s division. Almost 20 years later, in 1984, the first women’s Olympic Marathon was held in Los Angeles. This paper will examine why these three women ran and how their reasons for running changed based on their experiences. It will also analyze how their experiences shaped their efforts to work towards the establishment of the women’s Olympic Marathon. By analyzing these women’s experiences, the paper will determine their connection to the women’s movement at the time and if they set out to make a feminist statement.

Introduction

During the third mile
not the eighteenth as expected
she surged ahead
leaving behind the press
of bodies, the breath
hot on her back
and set a pace
the experts claimed
she couldn't possibly keep
to the end.
Sure, determined,
moving to an inner rhythm
measuring herself against herself
alone in a field of fifty
she gained the twenty-six miles
of concrete, asphalt and humid weather
and burst into the roar of the crowd
to run the lap around the stadium
at the same pace
once to finish the race
and then again in victory
and she was still fresh
and not even out of breath
and standing.[1]

This poem titled "Joan Benoit: 1984 Olympic Marathon Gold Medalist," written by Rina Farrarelli, tells the story of Joan Benoit's victory at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

1. Rina Farrarelli, "Joan Benoit: 1984 Olympic Marathon Gold Medalist," in *A Whole Other Ball Game, women's literature on women's sport*, edited by Joli Sandoz (New York: The Noonday Press), 1997, 157.

Benoit took the lead early in the women's marathon and ran to the finish becoming the first Olympic Women's Marathon champion but the question is what led to the opportunity for Benoit and 49 other women to stand at the starting line in 1984 for the first women's Olympic Marathon. This story started with the shift of distance running from a necessity, to carry messages, to a leisure activity. This shift led to the development of distance running as a sport, competition, and the marathon, a race of 26.2 miles. The idea for the length and event of the marathon came from the Greek legend of Pheidippides. Not only did the legend of Pheidippides provide a new athletics event, it also inspired the Olympic Marathon.

Although the marathon had been developed, competition in distance running and the marathon was not always open to all people. For many years, event organizers, in both athletic associations and the Olympics barred women from participation in the marathon, and there was no equivalent race for women since they were limited to sprints up to 800 meters. As more women learned about running and took up the sport, they began to seek opportunities to test their abilities in competition. Women began running and pursuing competition for many reasons, but in the same way distance running shifted, women pioneers in the marathon shifted their reasons for running and seeking the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon from the love of the sport to provide women with opportunities and a vehicle of empowerment. Three influential but not the only pioneers, include Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb, Katherine Switzer, and Nina Kuscsik. These three women's experiences parallel the ideas, methods of gaining equality, and goals of the second wave of the women's movement as they integrated the male only Boston Athletic Association Marathon, shifted their reasons for running, and established the women's Olympic Marathon.

Historiography

There is a vast amount of sources produced on the topic of the marathon but the sources address different aspects of the event. The sources fall into a number of categories, history, health and training, the experience of runners participating in the marathon, and the women's movement.

While there are many resources produced on the topic of the marathon, much less written on the experience of pioneering women. On the subject of women marathoners, the majority of the sources are primary and not secondary. Many of the primary sources are in the form of autobiographies, interviews, and newspaper sources. The primary sources are predominately composed of later reflections of the women are not from the time when they initially ran because at the time newspapers either did not write pieces on the events or the women were not spoken with, and only mentioned that they ran. For example, several of the women have written autobiographies, Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb's *To Boston With Love* (2016) and Kathrine Switzer's *Marathon Woman* (2007), both produced many decades after they competed in the BAA Marathon. Both of these autobiographies discuss the authors' experiences from when they began running through the establishment of the Olympic Marathon. These primary sources are essential to the study of the topic because they are firsthand accounts from the women who were taking the steps required to establish the women's marathon and are a reflection on their overall experience. These books are also important because they highlight the struggles and perceptions of women's running from the 1960s through 1980s and encouraged the shift in opinion towards women's running because they connected running with femininity as well as demonstrated their ability to complete and compete in the marathon distance. With women marathoners writing on

the topic of running, they were able to reach women across the country, become a form of encouragement and provide guidance on how running could fit into women's lives.

Like autobiographies, newspaper articles are similar in that they ask the runners why they ran and discuss their racing. However, newspaper articles are different from autobiographies because when they are studied they provided insight into the community and time period in which they were produced. These sources, although helpful, also have drawbacks because of bias. There is bias from reporters' interpretation of the events that are based on their values and opinions and what they are trying to achieve through their piece such as supporting or not supporting women's distance running as in the exaggeration of events in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic women's 800-meter run. One of the other forms of primary sources come from interviews. The interviews are important like the autobiographies because they are the direct words of the women. An issue with newspaper sources as well as a number of interviews and autobiographies is that many were recorded several decades after the events. This is problematic because of the time gap it could lead to the loss of information or altering of events and individuals may be reflecting on their experiences through a different framework than when the events were occuring. To combat this one can compare and contrast responses from multiple sources to determine the quality of the answers.

The majority of secondary sources on women pioneers comes in the form of magazine articles and a few scholarly articles. Many of the magazine articles are from the magazine *Runner's World* and are written by Amby Burfoot, winner of the 1968 BAA Marathon and an editor of *Runner's World*, who followed the journey of many of the pioneering women during

the 1970's to present.[2] Many of the magazine articles by Burfoot and others include the voice of the women using quotation. While the magazine articles are valuable, they do not analyze the events as much as a scholarly journal article.

There are few scholarly articles specifically on the topic of women's involvement in the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon and none that directly connect the women's changing perspective to the second wave of the women's movement. Although there are a few sources, they provide different perspectives on the subject. Annemarie Jutel's work, "'Thou Dost Run as in Flotation': Femininity, Reassurance and the Emergence of the Women's Marathon" discusses an interesting aspect of women's distance running. Jutel provides a different insight because it looks at the importance of femininity in the acceptance of the marathon and because of the created idea that femininity and running went together, it did not threaten existing social structures.[3] Another important article is by Jamie Schultz, "Going the Distance: The Road to the 1984 Olympic Women's Marathon" discusses the events and actions that led to the 1984 women's Olympic Marathon. In addition to these sources, the book *A Locker Room of Her Own* contains a chapter by Oren Renick and Lea Robin Velez titled, "Racing into the Storm: Roberta Gibb, Kathrine Switzer, and Women's Marathoning." This chapter is valuable because it discusses the struggles that Switzer and Gibb had to go through to run as well as how their efforts were inconsistent with the accepted gender roles for women at the time. Another source that discusses women's role in the marathon is in an article written by Nina Kuscsik, titled "The History of Women's Participation in the Marathon." This article is valuable because it discusses

2. Amby Burfoot, *First Ladies of Running: 22 Inspiring Profiles of the Revels, Rule Breakers, and Visionaries Who Changed the Sport Forever* (New York: Rodale Press, Inc., 2016), xvi.

3. Annemarie Jutel, "'Thou Dost Run as in Flotation': Femininity, Reassurance and the Emergence of the Women's Marathon." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 20, no. 3 (2003): 19 and 34.

women runners and their contributions to the marathon presenting the information in a chronological order. It is also unique because it is written by one of the women who was critical to the development of the women's Olympic Marathon because of her participation in marathon events and her work in removing obstacles to women's distance running. Although limited, the scholarly journal articles on the topic of women's distance running provide background information and varying interpretations of the events leading to the establishment of the event.

The literature on the experience of pioneering women in the marathon is limited, but the overall amount of sources on the event of the marathon is vast. Many more of these sources come from scholarly journal articles instead of primary sources. These sources discuss the history of the marathon and health and training. Some of the works that address the history of the marathon look at specific areas. For example, some authors direct their study to the ancient Olympics and the story of Pheidippides such as R. Grogan in "Run, Pheidippides, Run! The Story of the Battle of Marathon" and Barry Baldwin in "Re-running Marathon (A Reappraisal of the Greek Victory over the Persians in the Battle of Marathon)." Other studies of the marathon focus on a specific marathon such as Hal Higdon's book, *Boston: A Century of Running: Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Boston Athletic Association Marathon* which covers the history of the BAA Marathon from inception to the 1990s.

Another set of sources discuss health and training. In this group of sources, there has been a shift over time as more has been learned about running. In the past, the sources on health and training were often a warning to runners and listed the possible issues and health problems that could develop with participation in the sport. As more people began to run and there was further research conducted on the human body, for example, the work done by Dr. Ernest Van Aaken, a German sports physical and athletics trainer, which is discussed in Jutel's work, the

literature began to change to discuss the benefits of running for the individual and how to train without injury.[4] This literature is not only helpful in understanding the topic but was also essential to the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon because it helped to shift perceptions about women and running.

Besides material specifically related to the marathon, another set of sources are relevant to the topic, sources on the women's movement. There is a multitude of resources covering different aspects of the women's movement. In this study, important sources include books that discuss the history of the movement as well as strategy and beliefs. Another essential discussion in this set of sources is the recognition of different groups and viewpoints within the movement. Two books that help to understand the movement and differences within it are *Tidal Wave, How Women Changed America at Century's End* by Sara M. Evans and *Feminist Theory Today, An Introduction to Second Wave Feminism* by Judith Evans. The books also briefly touch on the connection between the second wave of the women's movement, Title IX, and Olympics particularly on increasing participation, opportunities in athletics and development of women's Olympic events but not the relevance to the marathon.[5] These books, in conjunction with the marathoner's autobiographies, reflect women's empowerment through physical activity and the realization of the connection between the two. These books are important, like other material on the women's movement, because they provide a background on the period as well as give insight

4. Annemarie Jutel, "'Thou Dost Run as in Flotation.'" *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 20, no. 3 (2003): 27-30.

5. Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 134 and 192.

into the social climate in which the marathoners began and ended their attempts to establish the Olympic Marathon.[6]

Sources on legislation, related to the second wave of the women's movement, are also beneficial. In particular, Title IX is relevant due to the impact it had on women's participation in high school and college sports. This is important because participation at these levels in athletics contributed to creating interest in distance running. This allowed for distance running to become more common, and gave women the foundation to succeed at the longer marathon distance since they had previous experience in competing in distance events. Some work on Title IX that provides helpful information include the book *Title IX* by Linda Jean Carpenter and R. Vivian Acosta. The study of Title IX is relevant because the legislation helped to make sports more accessible, increased participation numbers and from these changes came a demand for more athletic opportunities for women throughout the 1970s and 1980s.[7]

The variety of primary and secondary sources related to the marathon discuss different aspects of the event. As the area becomes more specific, the literature decreases. Although the literature decreases, other sources on the subject provide the background that is necessary to understand the topic. As well as being essential to the understanding of the topic, the shift in the literature, from warning women that running was harmful to how women running did not upset the current social structure was critical to the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon. The shift in literature is critical because it demonstrated that running could be beneficial for

6. Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave*., 1-214 and Judith Evans, *Feminist Theory Today: An Introduction to Second-wave Feminism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 13-62.

7. Linda Jean Carpenter and R. Vivian Acosta, *Title IX* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2005), 168-172 and Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave*, 134-135.

one's health and it helped to change perceptions about women who participated in the sport. Despite limited sources on the women's marathon, there is a wealth of information on subjects related to the understanding of the marathoners' stories and shifting attitudes such as sources dealing with the women's movement. The work that has been produced on the topic has gaps but with the gaps, it allows for the opportunity to look to new sources, find new perspectives, and continue to research the subject of the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon.

The Modern Olympic Marathon

A critical piece to the revival of the Olympic Games and the creation of the Olympic Marathon is the legend of Pheidippides. This legend originates with the Battle of Marathon, fought between the Athenians and Persians, in 490 B.C. with a man named Pheidippides who ran to carry messages for the Athenians from Athens to Sparta, Sparta to Marathon, and Marathon to Athens, a total of 280 miles with nearly 26 of those miles separating Marathon and Athens.[8] The legend of Pheidippides is enshrined in a poem written by Robert Browning in 1879. In this poem, Browning tells the story of Pheidippides' run and makes popular the idea that Pheidippides died after telling of the victory at Marathon. In the second to last verse, Browning writes of the last act Pheidippides does for his compatriots.

> Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day:
> So, when Persia was dust, all cried "To Akropolis!
> Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!
> 'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go shout!" He flung down his shield,
> Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the Fennel-field
> And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,

8. Barry Baldwin, "Re-running Marathon (A Reappraisal of the Greek Victory over the Persians in the Battle of Marathon)," *History Today* 48, no. 5 (1998): 46-47 and R. Grogan, "Run, Pheidippides, Run!" 189.

Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!" Like wine thro' clay,
Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died--the bliss![9]

Like the legend of Pheidippides, there is a legend tied to the creation of the Olympic Games. This legend is about a man named Pelops who seeks to marry Hippodamia, the daughter of King Oenomous. The king decrees that to marry his daughter one must escape the kingdom with her by chariot. Pelops completes this task and in celebration calls for a religious and athletic celebration known as the Olympic Games.[10] Together these legends inspired the revival of the Olympic Games. The revival began in Paris in the 1890s with Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a French nobleman, and then spread to Greece. Originally, plans set the Olympic Games in Pairs during the 1900 World Fair. With pressure from the Greeks, Coubertin agreed that Greece, the country where the games began, should hold the games in 1896 instead of in Paris.[11]

The Olympics began in Greece and the first written record of the Olympics is an inscription of results from 776 B.C. This date is established as the first Olympics; although, there is belief that celebrations including religious and athletic events were held at Olympia prior to the inscription.[12] Before the modern Olympic Games, there was not an event covering the distance of the marathon with the longest footrace comparing to today's 5000-meter run. Even at the time of the organization of the first modern Olympic Games, those participating in the sport of athletics did not participate in races more than a few miles.[13] Before the Olympic Games of

9. Robert Browning, "Pheidippides," The Literature Network, accessed Feb. 12, 2017, http://www.online-literature.com/robert-browning/shorter-poems/6/.

10. Hal Higdon, *Boston: A Century of Running*, 5.

11. Ibid., 7 and 9.

12. Ibid, 7.

13. Ibid., 9.

1896, there was no marathon except for the location in Greece and because of the Battle of Marathon and legend of Pheidippides the race was created.

In the 1896 Olympic Games, the marathon began in Marathon and finished in Athens, covering a similar route to which Pheidippides ran. The route chosen for the race equaled near 25 miles, slightly shorter than today's distance for the marathon. For the new event, 100,000 spectators came to watch the 17 competitors race to the stadium in Athens. The winner of the race, Spyridon Louis of Greece, took the lead at 4 kilometers and ran to victory in a time of 2:58:50. Following Louis was Kharilaos Vasilakos of Greece in 3:06:03 and in third Gyula Kellner of Hungary finishing in 3:06:35. Of the 17 men who competed in the race, seven of them did not finish.[14] The first Olympic Marathon influenced the decision to create more competitions at the marathon distance, in America, most notably the Boston Athletic Association Marathon.

The Boston Athletic Association Marathon, A Male Only Event

The Boston Athletic Association (BAA) located in Boston, Massachusetts heard of the Olympic Games to be held in Athens in 1896. The BAA decided to send a team of runners to compete in athletics events including the marathon. After the athletes returned home, the BAA learned more about the marathon and began planning their own competition. The first BAA Marathon took place on April 19, 1897.[15] The BAA Marathon covered 24.5 miles starting from Metcalf's Mill in the town of Ashland and finished at the Irvington Oval in Boston.[16] In the

14. "Marathon Men," IOC-International Olympic Committee- Olympics, last modified 2016, accessed Feb. 2, 2017, https://www.olympic.org/athens-1896/athletics/marathon-men.

15. Jeff Johnson, *The Boston Marathon.* Revised ed. Runner's Monthly Booklet, No. 10. 1974, 5.

16. "Boston Marathon History," Boston Athletic Association, accessed Feb 2, 2017, http://www.baa.org/races/boston-marathon/boston-marathon-history.aspx.

inaugural BAA Marathon, there were a total of 15 entrants. Of the 15 entrants, five did not complete the race. The winner of the race was John J. McDermott from New York City running 2:55:10.[17]

Throughout the years, the BAA Marathon continued to draw more and more runners as distance running and the marathon became more popular amongst the public. The race even began attracting competitors from countries outside North America but also became popular in Boston and each year thousands of spectators lined the course to watch the race.[18] As the race grew, the race organizers had to modify the course to meet the needs of increasing participants as well as the standardization of the distance at 26.2 miles. The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), founded in 1912 after the Stockholm Olympic Games as the world governing body for athletics, established the marathon at 26.2 miles in 1921, 25 years after the events first appearance in the Olympic Games.[19] This change moved the start of the Boston Marathon to its current start in the town of Hopkinton.[20]

While the BAA Marathon standardized and continued to grow, the race was limited to men only. As the number of participants grew, restrictions were introduced such as a minimum age of 19, Amateur Athletics Union (AAU) registration, and time qualifications.[21] Rules set by the AAU, which was "founded in 1888 to establish standards and uniformity in amateur sports," stated that women were not allowed to run in races over 1.5 miles which restricted them from

17. Hal Hidgon, *Boston: A Century of Running,* 21.

18. Jeff Johnson, *The Boston Marathon,* 3 and 5.

19. "Marathon," IAAF Athletics, accessed March 19, 2017, https://www.iaaf.org/disciplines/road-running/marathon.

20. "Boston Marathon History."

21. Jeff Johnson, *The Boston Marathon,* 22.

officially entering in races like the BAA Marathon.[22] Not only did rules prohibit women from running the marathon in competition, society's perceptions of women and medical reports added to beliefs that women should not and were not capable of running a marathon.

Beliefs About Women and Distance Running

For a long time, the majority of the American population did not perceive distance running as an acceptable activity for women nor did they think about it, as distance running was not commonplace. Many believed that if women ran they would lose their femininity and have numerous health issues that would affect their ability to become mothers. It was believed that running would cause women to become too muscular, masculine, and unattractive. Doctors and peers warned that if women ran they would have permanent physical damage, including not be able to become pregnant, cause one to miss periods, and anemia.[23] Much of the speculation on the health risks for women were a result of the 800-meter race in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games.

In the 1928 Olympics, a new event for women was added to the schedule, the 800-meter run. Nine women ran the event; all nine completed the race and only one collapsed at the finish. While these were the results of the race, journalists recorded the event writing that almost half the field did not finish the race and the other half collapsed due to their effort and desire to do well after crossing the finish line. John Tunis of the *New York Evening Post* wrote, "Below us on the cinder path were 11 wretched women, 5 of whom dropped out before the finish, while 5 collapsed after reaching the tape." Not only did the reports depict women as being incapable of

22. "Home," AAU The Official Home of the Amateur Athletic Union, last modified 2017, accessed April 12, 2017, https://www.aausports.org.

23. Amby Burfoot, *First Ladies of Running,* xv and 141 and Nina Kuscik, "The History of Women's Participation in the Marathon," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 301, no. 1 (1977): 865-866.

running the 800 meters, but they also portrayed women as appearing exhausted, in distress, and unattractive. The newspapers also warned that women who raced longer than 200 meters would have impaired reproductive capability.[24] From the reported outcome of the race, running became inappropriate for women, and the Olympic Committee decided to cut the 800-meter event from the games. The women's 800-meter race remained excluded until the 1960 Rome Olympic Games.

The outcome of this race lead to the limitation of distance running events for women along with creating superstitions that distance running was harmful for women. While these beliefs persisted through the mid-20th century, many women disregarded these warnings, discovered running, and ran far greater distances than 800-meter.

The Women's Movement and Title IX

A renewed interest in women's distance running and a desire to establish the women's marathon occurred in the mid-1960's near the same time as the sprouting of the second wave of the women's movement. With the beginning of this movement, two groups came to the forefront. These two groups held different perspectives, different goals, and pursued different avenues to achieve those goals. These groups predominantly consisted of white middle-class women. The first group, known as liberal feminist, was often formed of older professionals involved in networks surrounding federal and state commissions on the status of women. They believed that to achieve change obstacles to women's full participation in public life needed to be removed. This group aimed for equality of opportunity. Their strategy for achieving this included working in areas of education, federal and state policies, and legal statutes. The second

24. Roger Robinson, "Eleven Wretched Women," What really happened in the first Olympic women's 800m," *Runner's World*, May 14, 2012.

group, radical feminist, was often younger activists who were involved in the civil rights and student movements of the 1960's and did not only want to remove obstacles but also believed in the need for transformational changes in societal institutions and in the public to create new social systems to combat political oppression. Besides these two strands of the second wave of the feminist movement, many more groups developed within the movement that had their own goals and plans to achieve them.[25]

During the mid- 1960s many Americans lacked knowledge on the women's movement and hardly knew of feminism, but as the movement progressed and discussion grew in the media more people became aware. By 1969, with the increase in media coverage, more people began to take notice of the movement.[26]

As a major success of the second wave of the women's movement and an important step in the establishment of the women's marathon was the passage of Title IX in 1972, which carried the force of a law, with the regulations acceptance by Congress on July 21, 1975.[27] Title IX states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."[28] A following section of the regulation, Section 106.41, specifically deals with athletics and states:

a) *General*. No person shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another person or otherwise be discriminated against in any interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural

25. Judith Evans, *Feminist Theory Today*, 44., Sara M. Evans, *Tidal* Wave, 21 and 142 and Susan M. Shaw, Janet Lee, *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions, Classic and Contemporary Readings* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2004), 9.

26. Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave*, 18 and 39.

27. Linda Jean Carpenter and R. Vivian Acosta, *Title IX*, 6.

28. Ibid., 3.

athletics offered by a recipient, and no recipient shall provide any such athletics separately on such basis.

b) *Separate teams*. Notwithstanding the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section, a recipient may operate or sponsor separate teams for members of each sex where selection for such teams is based upon competitive skill or the activity involved is a contact sport. However, where a recipient operates or sponsors a team in a particular sport for members of one sex but operates or sponsors no such team for members of the other sex, and athletic opportunities for members of that sex must be allowed to try-out for the team offered unless the sport involved is a contact sport. For the purposes of this part, contact sports include boxing, wrestling, rugby, ice hockey, football, basketball and other sports the purpose or major activity of which involves bodily contact.

c) *Equal opportunity*. A recipient which operates or sponsors interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics shall provide equal athletic opportunity for members of both sexes. In determining whether equal opportunities are available the Directory will consider, among other factors:

1) Whether the selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of members of both sexes;
2) The provision of equipment and supplies;
3) Scheduling of games and practice time;
4) Travel an per diem allowance;
5) Opportunity to receive coaching and academic tutoring;
6) Assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors;
7) Provision of locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities;
8) Provision of medical and training facilities and services;
9) Provision of housing and dining facilities and services;
10) Publicity.

Unequal aggregate expenditures for members of each sex or unequal expenditures for male and female teams if a recipient operates or sponsors separate teams will not constitute noncompliance with this section, but the Assistant Secretary may consider the failure to provide necessary funds for teams for one sex in assessing equality of opportunity for members of each sex.[29]

This means that all ages and levels of participation are impacted by the regulation. It means that women's sports receive financial assistance, that one can try-out for a non-contact sports team if there is not separate male and female teams and if not able to meet the requirements of the team

29. Linda Jean Carpenter and R. Vivian Acosta, *Title IX*, 9-10.

with enough interest and competition another team must be created and receive equal benefit.[30] Each of these requirements are critical to the development of women's athletics programs on a variety of levels and in turn contributed to the increase in participation and the desire for more women to pursue distance running on a personal and competitive level.

This piece of legislation is important because it contributed to the growth of women's athletics, increased participation, and added access to Olympic competition.[31] For example, in 1971, 294,015 girls participated in high school organized sports and by 1978, the year of compliance for Title IX, 2,083,040 girls participated.[32] The increase in numbers of high school athletes is relevant because with increasing numbers of women athletes and elite athletes running the marathon it helped create popularity and interest for the sport which is necessary for the establishment of the sport as an event in the Olympic program. Although there is no marathon event in high school or college athletic programs these programs helped to set the foundation for participants to continue running. After finishing athletics in school there are limited events to participate in for distance runners so the next step for many, if they wish to continue to run competitively, is to participate in the marathon. In the same year that Title IX passed, the AAU required that a women's race needed to be added to marathon events. The acceptance of Title IX and the AAU's shift in regulations demonstrates changing perceptions towards women's capabilities as well as how efforts of the women's movement and women marathoners met in the struggle to gain opportunities for all women in sport.

30. Linda Jean Carpenter and R. Vivian Acosta, *Title IX*, 65-82.

31. Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave*, 67 and 134.

32. Linda Jean Carpenter and R. Vivian Acosta, *Title IX*, 168.

Along with the importance of the effect of Title IX on expanding involvement, which is essential to adding an event to the Olympic Games, increasing participation is important because with more numbers sport became more acceptable for women and was seen as a part of being feminine, and in turn not as threatening.[33] Despite changing attitudes, there was and still continues to be resistance towards women's participation in athletics. The women's movement along with the passage of Title IX helped to make rapid changes in women's athletics, giving women more opportunity to participate in a variety of sports.

The second wave of the feminist movement and Title IX are intertwined with the establishment of the women's marathon. Both the movement and Title IX contributed to the development of the marathon and the ideas put forth by the movement reflect and are shared in the experience of pioneering women in distance running. Despite the connection, the women who sought the establishment of the marathon did not pursue running to make a feminist statement at the start but over time, their reasons for running aligned with the movement's goals.

Women Pioneers, Changing Perspectives

Numerous women who participated in the BAA Marathon in the 1960's through 1970's played a crucial role in establishing not only the women's marathon at the BAA race but also the women's Olympic Marathon. Several of these women include but are not limited to, Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb, Kathrine Switzer, and Nina Kuscsik. While all of these women were a part of the effort to establish the women's Olympic Marathon, each woman began running and sought competition for personal reasons and only later did they realize their running could have a greater impact than just in their lives.

33. John A. Lucas and Ronald A. Smith, "Women's Sport: A Trial of Equality," in *Her Story in Sport: A Historical Anthology of Women in Sports,* Ed. By Reet Howell (New York: Leisure Press), 1982, 260-261.

Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb

Even though Roberta Gibb grew up in the Boston area she did not take interest in the BAA Marathon until she was in college. Gibb started running in college, and on a visit home from school, she watched the 1964 BAA Marathon. Gibb recalls, "Here were people running on the earth, and they had such a sense of themselves… I could see their faces. I just decided I was going to run the race. It wasn't for prize money. I didn't even realize at that point women weren't allowed to run."[34] After watching the race, Gibb planned to run the BAA Marathon the upcoming year, so she sent a letter to the BAA asking to participate in the race for the 1966 event. In response to her letter, race directors denied her permission to run because it was against AAU rules that a woman run more than 1.5miles.[35] This statement shocked Gibb because at the time she was running many miles, sometimes up to 40 at once.[36] After the experience of being denied entry to the BAA Marathon Gibb realized that running was more than a personal challenge but through running, she could challenge the way people thought about women and their abilities.[37] With these thoughts, Gibb decided that she would run and finish the BBA Marathon.

Gibb ran the race in 1966 as the only woman. Gibb was nervous about the race and prior to the start tried to remain inconspicuous for fear that BAA organizers would notice a woman at the start and would throw her out or that she would be arrested. Gibb managed to start the race

34. Oren Renick and Lea Robin Velez, "Racing into the Storm: Roberta Gibb, Kathrine Switzer, and Women's Marathoning." In *A Locker Room of Her Own*, edited by David C. Ogden and Joel Nathan Rosen (University Press of Mississippi, 2013), 164.

35. Kathrine Switzer, *Marathon Woman: Running the Race to Revolutionize Women's Sports* (New York: First Carroll and Graf ed. 2007), 117.

36. Oren Renick and Lea Robin Velez, "Racing into the Storm," 164.

37. Amby Burfoot, "First Lady of Boston," *Runner's World*, April 6, 2016, 86 and 90.

with no confrontations, but on the course, some of the other competitors noticed a woman was running. Gibb recalls that the other runners were friendly and were supportive of her running.[38] Not only did Gibb fear the response of others, she also feared not finishing because of the implications it would cause for women's participation in distance running. In the race Gibb realized that she should not push herself because if she did not finish she "would have set women back another 50 years, or maybe longer."[39] Gibb completed the entire race in 3:21:40 but was barred from crossing the finish line and was not listed as an official finisher.[40]

After the race, Gibb made it apparent that her attitude towards her accomplishment shifted from the time of her first desire to run the race to her participation in 1966. With this, she saw more reasons than the love of the sport to run. Her perception shifted from intrinsic satisfaction to reasons more in line with feminist goals. Gibb stated that she ran because she loved to run and she "didn't run the marathon to threaten anyone. I did it because I wanted to change the perception that women couldn't do it. I said I thought women could be feminine and strong and athletic at the same time." [41] Gibb later went on to run and finish as the first woman from 1966 through 1968 at the BAA Marathon. These efforts were unrecognized by the BAA until 1996, 30 years after her first run.

When Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb wrote to the BAA, she did not know that women were prohibited from entering, but through the experience of being denied entry to the BAA Marathon, led her to transform her running. She transformed her running from an activity that

38. Bobbi Gibb, *To Boston with Love* (Y42K Publishing Services, 2016), 32-38 and Hal Higdon 125.

39. Brigit Katz, "The incredible story of Bobbi Gibb, the first woman to run the Boston Marathon," *Women in the World*, April 20, 2015.

40. Kathrine Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 119 and Amby Burfoot, "First lady of Boston", 91.

41. Amby Burfoot, *First Ladies*, 50.

she did because she enjoyed it to one to make people aware of what women were capable of achieving and challenge the ideas of where women belonged in society.

Kathrine Switzer

Kathrine Switzer, like Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb, started running in school. Switzer started in high school and continued running in college. Switzer began running in high school to get in shape for field hockey. Unlike Gibb, she ran for her college track and field and cross-country teams. Switzer's inspiration to run the marathon came from her cross-country coach at Syracuse, Arnie Briggs, who often spoke of the BAA Marathon. Briggs initially refused to help, but Switzer convinced him that if she ran the full distance in practice that he would help her. She completed the distance and with the help of Briggs sent in her application to participate in the 1967 race. On the application, Switzer listed her name as K.V. Switzer instead of Kathrine. She was officially entered in the BAA Marathon and received a race number. Later BAA organizers would say she deceived the BAA by not writing Kathrine on her application and that if they would have known, she would not have been given a race number. After confirming her place in the race, Switzer, along with her coach and several others from the Syracuse track and field and cross-country teams accompanied her in the BAA Marathon.[42]

Switzer had no troubles at the beginning of the 1967 race, but as more and more competitors realized she was a woman the news reached the press and race organizers. Near mile two, one of the race organizers, Jock Semple, heard of a woman in the race. He made his way towards Switzer and attempted to physically remove her from the course. Instead of being removed from the course, a member of the Syracuse track team, Tim Miller, also Switzer's

42. Kathrine Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 71-72 and 118.

boyfriend at the time pushed Semple away from Switzer allowing her to continue running.[43] Switzer recalls that at the moment when Semple tried to remove her from the race it was the point when running had an alternate meaning. She said, "When I first ran the Boston Marathon, I ran it because I just wanted to run a marathon. I was a 20-year-old kid having fun with my cross-country team. I was serious about my running, I was very proud of being a woman, but I wasn't there to make a feminist statement. I didn't even, know what the feminist movement was. Women were going and sitting in men's bars and I thought, 'Why would they want to do that?' It wasn't until Jock tackled me that everything changed. I suddenly became an enlightened person." and that "during the race I made the decision to devote some part of my life to changing this situation with women's sports."[44] Switzer, like Gibb, changed her perspective about running because she was personally affected by the attempts to keep women out of the marathon. Due to her experience, Switzer continued to pursue creating opportunities for women runners long after she ran the BAA Marathon.

In 1967, Switzer completed the BAA marathon finishing behind Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb but brought much more attention to women's running. Photos of Switzer being attacked by Semple headlined in papers across the country and spread around the world. After the race, the AAU suspended her for "running without a chaperon."[45] Following her run, Switzer decided to continue working towards the establishment of the women's marathon by collaborating with

43. Kathrine Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 90-96, 60 and Hal Higdon, *Boston: A Century of Running*, 131-132.

44. Donna Ditota, "Kathrine Switzer," *The Post- Standard*, October 26, 2003. and Jennifer Herman Dervis, "Kathrine Switzer Leads the Advance in Women's Distance Running," *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston, Mass.), May 12, 1987.

45. Annemarie Jutel, '"Thou Dost Run as in Flotation," 20.

Avon Products, Inc., a beauty company that used door-to-door representatives and word of mouth to promote their products and sought ways to empower women through economic advancement.[46] With this collaboration and her own work, Switzer planned to develop women's races that had a greater impact than what the love of running could do for one individual.

Nina Kuscsik

Nina Kuscsik's first became interested in running in May of 1954 when she learned of Roger Bannister, the first person to run under a four-minute mile. Later, after attempting other sports, Kuscsik found a book on running and decided to try the sport. She became an avid runner and participated in numerous races in the late 1960's and 1970's.[47] When Kuscsik ran the BAA Marathon in 1969, she recalled that in taking part in the race she "wasn't going out to prove that women could do anything" and during the race realized that something had to be done to end the restrictions placed on women runners.[48] In many of the races, Kuscsik met other women runners and together they worked to end what they perceived as discrimination in the sport. An important act that changed Kuscsik's view towards her running came when the AAU allowed women to run the marathon in 1972, the same year as the passage of Title IX, with the stipulation that they must meet the men's qualifying standards and had to be separated from the men at the start by either start line or time. The women who qualified for the BAA Marathon, a total of six, were not affected much by these new rules as Kuscsik remembers once the gun sounded, "we

46. "History," Avon Products Inc., last modified 2016, accessed March 12, 2016, http://www.avoncompany.com/aboutavon/history/index.html.

47. Nina Kuscsik, interview by Gary Cohen, June 2013, transcript, Gary Cohen Running, http://www.garycohenrunning.com/Interviews/Kuscsik.aspx.

48. Charles Butler, "Sole Sisters of '72," *Runner's World*, Nov 2012.

simply merged onto the road with the men and started wherever we wanted."[49] Kuscsik went on to win the 1972 BAA Marathon as the first official women's marathon winner.

Later in the year, Kuscsik also ran the New York City Marathon. Like the BAA Marathon, the women had stipulations at the start and were required to begin 10 minutes before the men. After having a similar experience at the BAA Marathon, the women participating at the New York City Marathon, with Kuscsik leading, decided to have a sit-down protest on the start line to demonstrate their frustration with the AAU rules. Some of the signs the women held read "The AAU is Archaic" and "Hey, AAU, This Is 1972. Wake Up."[50] Kuscsik recalls, "We decided it [rules regulating the start] was unfair and discriminatory, but when I look back, it kind of made sense that the women should have a separate starting line and not take advantage of using men in the competition. But back then it seemed discriminatory….It was really important that we were doing this. There was a lot of excitement; we proved our point and the media really captured it. We had already filed a lawsuit against the AAU if they were going to continue this discriminatory policy."[51] Kuscsik went on the win the women's section of the 1972 New York City Marathon. After running the marathon competitively for several years and working to change the AAU regulations, Kuscsik continued her efforts to bring equality to the women's marathon in working towards the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon.

These three women began running not to make a statement but because it interested them. Each woman found that running benefited themselves in some way; even as simple as something that brought joy to their lives. As these women sought more opportunities in distance running,

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49. Amby Burfoot, *Frist Ladies*, 106.

50. Charles Butler, "Sole Sisters of '72."

51. Nina Kuscsik, interview by Gary Cohen.

like women in the second wave of the women's movement sought increasing possibilities for women and societal shifts, they faced challenges. These challenges are what changed what running meant to the marathoners. It was no longer just something that was for enjoyment but a way to challenge society's perception of women and make gains for women in athletics. This shift reflects the second wave of the women's movement because these women initially did not run to make a statement but over time as the movement became more prominent the two groups shared similar ideas and goals such as seeking to change people's minds and to strive for equality.

The Impact of Women Pioneer's

Each one of these women, Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb, Kathrine Switzer, and Nina Kuscsik played a substantial role in the progression of the women's marathon. After running the BAA Marathon in the late 1960's and early 1970's, each woman followed a different path but remained active in distance-running creating lasting impacts in the sport through their efforts.

Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb

After running the BAA Marathon from 1966 through 1968, Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb did not continue to pursue advances in the marathon for women at the same intensity as other pioneering women. After the 1960's Gibb did not compete at the same level as she got married, had children, went on to law school and then became a sculptor. Although these changes occurred, Gibb states she is thankful for what the marathon gave to her, a consciousness and an awareness of how social change occurs, which contributed to her life perspective and shaped what she has tried to accomplish in her lifetime.[52] Through her life and with her BAA Marathon,

52. J.E. Vader, "Pioneers," in *Women and Sports in the United States*, edited by Jean O'Reilly and Susan K. Chan (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2007), 40.

Gibb tried to challenge beliefs, bring people together, lessen the divide between men and women, create opportunities, and make the world a better place.[53] For Gibb, running, only briefly, was a statement that aligned with the women's movement in that she challenged preexisting ideas and wanted to change individual's perceptions, but after her years running the BAA Marathon she continued to run for the same reason she started, because she enjoyed it.

Although Gibb was not active in establishing the women's Olympic Marathon, her accomplishments in the BAA Marathon allowed her to be a part of the continued growth of the women's marathon. For example, for the 1984, U.S. Olympic Trials, Gibb was commissioned to sculpt trophies for the top three finishers. In regards to the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon Gibb states, "I was the seed, but I'm not the organizer."[54] Later on, Gibb also wrote an autobiography discussing her experience titled, *To Boston With Love*. Although Gibb did not continue to push for the women's marathon, she inspired others and they continued what she had begun after her completion of the BAA Marathon in 1966 and with those efforts contributed to the running boom that began in the 1990's.

Kathrine Switzer

Unlike Gibb, Kathrine Switzer became highly active in the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon after her run in the 1967 BAA Marathon. A factor that contributed to her involvement in the sport was due to the media coverage she received and the photos of her and Jock Semple that circulated worldwide.

53. Bobbi Gibb, interviewed by Gary Cohen, April 2016, transcript, Gary Cohen Running, http://www.garycohenrunning.com/Interviews/Gibb.aspx and J.E. Vader, "Pioneers," 40.

54. Amby Burfoot, *First Ladies*, 53.

Fig. 1: "Press Photos," in Kathrine Switzer Marathon Woman, last modified 2017, accessed Feb 7, 2017, http://kathrineswitzer.com/press-room/photos/. Kathrine Switzer (Number 261) running the 1967 BAA Marathon when race official Jock Semple tries to remove her from the race but is pushed of the course instead. Photo credit to the Boston Herald.

The photos of Switzer called for a discussion on women's equality in athletics and in turn, became associated with the women's movement. Out of the discussion came the possibility for feminist protest in regards to equal access and in challenging traditional feminine ideals.[55] Even with the coverage of her run, Switzer was still unsure what she perceived her run as while many others were using her experience as a way to further their own agenda. Switzer states that she questioned the feminist movement and wondered if the "movement was trying to appropriate my running the Boston Marathon as their own thing when they had absolutely nothing to do with it. It didn't mean I wasn't sympathetic to their cause, but I did resent the appropriation."[56] Switzer knew that after her experience in the BAA Marathon that women deserved the

55. Annemarie Jutel, "Thou Dost Run as in Flotation," 21 and Oren Renick and Lea Robin Velez, "Racing into the Storm," 163.

56. Donna Ditota, "Kathrine Switzer."

opportunity to run but she was not yet ready to declare what sort of statement she was making. With or without a purpose driven reason to run she became known across the country and because of the acknowledgment and coverage, more opportunities to make a change came her way.

Switzer began to help create and organize racing opportunities for women with the ultimate goal of the approval for a women's Olympic Marathon. In 1972, Switzer along with Nina Kuscsik and others organized the Crazylegs Mini-Marathon, the first women's only road race.[57] Some of her most critical work in helping to establish the women's marathon came in 1976 when Avon executives reached out to her to develop programs to empower women through sport, specifically help with the creation of a women's marathon in Atlanta, Georgia. Switzer set out to make running events accessible, enjoyable, and unintimidating for all women who wanted to participate.[58] The projects Switzer worked on were not only important in providing elite athletes the chance to run on a world level but also reached women in the general public because of the nature and sales techniques of the Avon company and provided an example that women could be athletic and feminine at the same time. After working on the proposal for the women's marathon Switzer took a job at Avon to continue working on the Atlanta Marathon along with other projects associated with women's athletics. The Avon International Marathon in Atlanta became a reality with 152 women from eight countries participating. With this race's success, an additional series of Avon races were approved which took place in Los Angeles, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro, Paris, Boston, Moscow, and London.[59]

57. Kathrine Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 175-177.

58. "Avon, Women & the Olympics: Driving a Marathon Revolution," *CSRwire* (Springfield), July 31, 2012. and Kathrine Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 313-318.

The 1980 Avon Championship Marathon, in London, which went through the heart of the city, shutting down roads for the first time, was pivotal in gaining approval for the women's Olympic Marathon. The London event was essential because it brought together women from around the world. Two-hundred participants came from twenty-seven countries on five continents. These totals surpassed the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) requirement of participation from twenty-four countries on three continents.[60] With this amount of participation, the London Marathon proved that the marathon had become a global sport. The next step for Switzer after the Avon Championship Marathon in London was to continue lobbying for the women's Olympic Marathon and provide support to the Los Angeles Olympic Committee in developing a pitch to the IOC for the women's Olympic Marathon.[61]

Kathrine Switzer's ability to be involved in the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon was possible because she pursued her passion for running and wanted other women to experience the same opportunities that running gave her, joy, a sense of freedom and accomplishment, and a career path. Her response to the London Championships exemplifies her desire to have other women experience the same opportunity through running. Switzer stated that running is "a part of the self-discovery process," that "women are beginning to take joy in their own movement, in the feelings of strength that physical accomplishment can bring," and that there is "beauty of women in motion."[62] These statements reflect benefits of running for

59. Kathrine Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 333-335, and 352 and "When I'm running, said the long-distance cosmetics executive and philosopher, I feel I'm part of the leaves, the grass, the sun, and the sky," *Guardian Women*, August 1, 1980.

60. Kathrine Switzer, Interview with Gary Cohen, transcript Gary Cohen Running, http://www.garycohenrunning.com/Interviews/Switzer.aspx.

61. "Avon, Women & the Olympics: Driving a Marathon Revolution."

62. "When I'm running," *Guardian Women*, August 1, 1980.

women and how femininity could be maintained in athletic participation thus making running appear appropriate for women giving more women the opportunity to run. Switzer's work reflects the second wave of the women's movement despite Switzer's resentment because like the movement she wanted to prove women were capable of achieving success when given the opportunity and that they should have the opportunity to run.

Nina Kuscsik

After competing in several marathons before the 1972 BAA Marathon, Kuscsik experienced what the other pioneering women faced, not being allowed to officially participate in the marathon. With this restriction, Kuscsik set out to gain approval from the AAU for the women's marathon. After the acceptance of the women's marathon and following the implementation of further restrictions, she worked to change those regulations and then went on to work towards the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon.

Kuscsik began by attending AAU conventions and challenging the rules. She first attended the convention in 1972 in Kansas City to discuss the rule about a separate start for women. She attended this meeting with a lawsuit prepared by the American Civil Liberties Union lawyers. She was successful at the meeting to get the rule dropped.[63] In 1974, she became an AAU delegate and helped form the first women's long-distance running committee. In the same year, Kuscsik worked to develop the first AAU American Women's Marathon Championship that took place in San Mateo, California.[64] With the committee, Kuscsik worked on legislation and introduced a resolution at the New York Academy of Sciences Conference on

63. Charles Butler, "Sole Sisters of '72."

64. Kathrine Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 241.

the Marathon, which supported the marathon in the Olympic Games. This resolution stated, "Therefore be it resolved: That it is the considered judgment of the participants of this conference that a women's marathon event as well as other long distance races for women be included in the Olympic program forthwith."[65] This material contributed to the approval of the women's Olympic Marathon in the United States in 1977. The legislation was later brought to the IOC but it failed to pass in 1980.[66]

With the continued efforts of Kuscik and other pioneering women, the addition of the women's marathon was approved for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Throughout the years, Kuscsik worked towards the Olympic Marathon she never stopped running because she liked the freedom she found in the sport.[67] After completing this work Kuscsik reflected on her experience stating, "running for myself and working for other women's rights in running has been fulfilling" and that the women's Olympic Marathon "was an important statement about fairness in sports for all women."[68] It is clear that after Nina Kuscsik experienced discrimination in running she channeled her passion for running to further women's rights on the racecourse so that women would have an equal opportunity to test their abilities. Her work reflects the second wave of the women's movement in the methods because she, like the women's movement used the legal system and challenged policies to achieve the goal of the establishment of the women's marathon.

65. Annemarie Jutel, "Thou Dost Run as in Flotation," 33 and Nina Kuscsik, "History of Women's Participation in the Marathon," 873.

66. Nina Kuscsik, interview with Gary Cohen.

67. Ibid.

68. Amby Burfoot, *First Ladies*, 109.

Each of these women, Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb, Kathrine Switzer, and Nina Kuscsik shared similar challenges in their quest to run the marathon. From their success and experience at the Boston Marathon, they continued to contribute to women's distance running on numerous levels. Their love of the sport and the benefits they saw and experienced in physical activity led them to push for women's opportunities in distance running. In examining their efforts after their participation in the Boston Marathon, it is clear that their reasons for running shifted. While there was a shift, they never forgot why they began running and wanted to give women the same opportunities they discovered in the sport. Because they never lost this perspective, their efforts were not meant to make a feminist statement but aligned with the goals of the movement to create opportunity, equality, and change minds and institutions which overtime reflected the second wave of the women's movement more and more.

Los Angeles, 1984, The First Olympic Marathon for Women

In February of 1982 at the Executive Board meeting for the IOC, the IOC released a statement saying the "women's marathon to be included on the Olympic programme for the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad in Los Angeles, but not at the same time as the men's event."[69] With this statement the inclusion of the women's Olympic Marathon became official.

The American women's Olympic Trials Marathon took place in Olympia, Washington in May of 1984. There was a total of 238 competitors. Those who went on to the Olympic event included Joan Benoit running a 2:31:04, Julie Brown 2:31:41, and Julie Isphording 2:32:26.[70] All three women participated in the women's Olympic Marathon event on August 5, 1984 in Los

69. David E. Martin and Roger W. H. Gynn, *The Olympic* Marathon (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2000), 336.

70. Amby Burfoot, "Women's Olympic Trials and Marathon Results," *Runner's World*, April 14, 2008.

Angeles. Competing in the race were forty-nine women from twenty-eight different countries.[71] In the race, Joan Benoit took the lead near the 5-kilometer mark and managed to maintain a gap to the finish to win the first women's Olympic Marathon in a time of 2:24:52. Following Benoit was Grete Anderson of Norway, 2:26:18, and Rosa Mota of Portugal, 2:26:57.[72]

After her victory, Benoit reflected on her own journey to the Olympic Marathon. In a comment made several years later she contributed her success to those who set the stage for her saying, "I consider myself a part of the next generation," and that "I'm not in the same league as the pioneer women runners who came before me. They were part of the process of history changing. They brought progress to the sport. They are in a league of their own. They had guts, they had talent, and, most of all, they had the passion to pursue the sport they loved."[73] The work the pioneering women did helped give Benoit and hundreds of other women the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

All three women, Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb, Kathrine Switzer, and Nina Kuscsik were all either present or watched women's Olympic Trials or the women's Olympic Marathon in 1984. They also expressed what they felt after working so hard to get the event established. Their expressions relate back to why they ran, originally because they enjoyed running and with the shift, to provide women with increasing opportunities. Kuscsik demonstrates the happiness she felt when watching the marathon. She stated, "I was there in Los Angeles for the Olympics and was so proud that we had finally had the women's Olympic Marathon."[74] On the other hand,

71. Jamie Schultz, "Going the Distance: The Road to the 1984 Olympic Women's Marathon," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 2014, 72.

72. David E. Martin and Roger W.H. Gynn, *The Olympic Marathon*, 342.

73. Amby Burfoot, *First Ladies*, 229.

74. Nina Kuscsik, interview with Gary Cohen.

Switzer notes what the race showed the world. She said, "In one dramatic race, they showed the world the limitlessness of women's heroic capacity" and "Everyone had come to accept what women could do in the social and intellectual realms, but it took the Olympic Marathon to show the entire world how physical and powerful women could be."[75] With the first women's Olympic Marathon the pioneering women's desires and hopes materialized and millions now knew the impact of running the marathon for women as the race was broadcast live for all to see.

Conclusion

The revival of the marathon for the 1896 Athens Olympic Games sprouted from legend. After watching the marathon for the first time many people became intrigued by this test of endurance and sought to simulate the event. Following these Olympic Games, the Boston Athletic Association set up a marathon event that would become one of the most prestigious footraces in America. For 69 years, the BAA Marathon was a male only event until Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb decided to run. Following Gibb, many other women participated in the race including Kathrine Switzer and Nina Kuscsik.

All of these women decided to run the BAA Marathon for no other reason than they loved running and wanted to test their abilities, not to make a statement. Although this was their initial reason for running that shifted with the challenges they faced while entering and running the race. Their efforts in the BAA Marathon and experience led them to continue to pursue distance running not only for themselves but to give other women the same opportunity. To give other women similar options, Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb, Katherine Switzer, and Nina Kuscsik decided to work towards establishing the women's Olympic Marathon. Through the process, the

75. Kathrine Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 392 and Amby Burfoot, *First Ladies*, 65.

women did not seek to make a statement directly tied to the women's movement but to provide opportunity and to open up distance running to women around the world. These women did not claim their actions as being a part of the second wave of the women's movement although, at the time, both groups worked towards similar goals such as equality and creating opportunities and the public perceived the marathoner's actions as aligning with the movement. Along with similar goals, the marathoners used similar tactics to achieve their goals as the liberal and radical groups of the women's movement such as working on a legal level as well as an individual and societal level. The pioneering women's experience and work reflects the thinking of the time but is separate from the movement despite parallels because the goal of the women was not to make a statement but to help other women discover the benefits of running.

The pioneering women marathoners let the love of the sport direct their action but with increasing experiences of discrimination, they worked towards equalizing distance running for themselves and future runners by embracing ideas and tactics of the second wave of the women's movement. Although not realizing or acknowledging it at the time these women did not associate themselves with the second wave of the women's movement but as historians looking back on their experiences and actions it is clear the they were a part of a larger social movement of the time.

The work of Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb, Kathrine Switzer, and Nina Kuscsik changed the sport of distance running immensely and in turn have impacted thousands of women who now have to chance to run and compete because of their efforts. Their work has not only affected individuals but has contributed to the acceptance of women distance runners in today's society. Today the majority of race finishers are women. A 2015 survey, by running usa, states 57% of

race finishers are women compared to 25% in 1990.[76] Along with more women participating in running events, in general, there has also been an increase in women participating in the marathon distance. In a 2015 survey, 44% of marathon participants were women as compared to 1980 when there was only 10%.[77] While gains have been made in the sport to give more women the opportunity to take part in distance running and participate in the marathon there is still much work to be done as women across the world still face challenges in being accepted as capable athletes.

76. "Statistics and Research," running usa, accessed March 3, 2017, http://www.runningusa.org/statistics.

77. "2015 Marathon Report," running usa, accessed March 27, 2017, http://www.runningusa.org/marathon-report-2016?returnTo=main.

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